

# ugvm

The uk.games.video.misc Magazine

## Christmas Special!



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## Christmas 2003

deKay: NICE PARTING  
Tim: Oh yes  
Tim: I look odd there  
deKay: And you have the front to take  
the piss out of my beard??!

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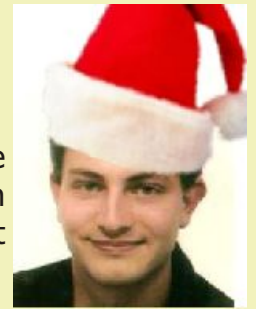
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## Christmas '03

# Welcome

It hardly seems a month since the last issue of **ugvm**, and yet here we are again ... oh hang on, it wasn't a month. Let's start again.



Welcome to the Christmas special edition of **ugvm** - we've put together a special edition of our magazine to help you with deciding what to buy loved ones this Christmas, and what to look out for in the January sales. To do this, we've put together **What to Buy?**, which looks at which of the four consoles would be most suited for your purposes, and **ugvm Recommends...** looks at the best games you can get for your money. To top it off, the **Retro Buyer's Guide** shows just what you can get for the person who has everything - apart from the obvious nothing, of course.

In addition, we've got a great feature looking at twenty-seven **Game Boy Advance** games, and a review of the ultimate in Christmas games. Also, don't forget to vote in the second annual **ugvm Awards** - the nominees are listed on page 5.

Merry Christmas, and have a great New Year!

**Tim (Deputy Editor) \***

## What's Inside This Issue...



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# What To Buy?

With four consoles on the market, it is difficult to decide on which one to buy. More difficult is deciding which second console to buy should you already have one. **ugvm** can help you make that vital decision! **deKay** looks at the pros and cons of each machine.



## Prices

RRP: £150, expect to pay £125 in most shops for a standalone machine with one controller. You'll also need a memory card (about £18), and if you want to play online you'll need to fork out in the region of £30 for a network adapter.



## Prices

RRP: £80, but that'll get you a game or two in the shops as well. A memory card will set you back £10-20 depending on the capacity. A broadband/LAN adapter is about £35, but almost everywhere is out of stock. A Game Boy Player (to let you play GB/GBA games on your GC) also costs about £35.

## Sony Playstation 2

As a "first" console, the PS2 will seem the most obvious choice for most people. In fact, to many, "Playstation" and "Games Console" mean one and the same.

The PS2 boasts the largest collection of games for a home console, in part due to the fact that it can play almost all PSone games as well as PS2 titles. However, as we all know, quantity does not equal quality and a huge proportion of the PS2's library is really dire. Thankfully, there are still plenty of great games for it, including GTA: Vice City, Jak II and Ico. For people who like a wide variety of genres, the PS2 is probably the best choice, since it can cater for everyone in that respect. If you're into sports titles, then the PS2 is really your best choice, as not only does it have the superb Pro Evo Soccer 3, but it is the only console to have online play in EA's range of sports games.

Be aware, however, that the PS2 is starting to show its age somewhat these days, and multifunction games such as Soul Calibur II have shown that the PS2 is lacking the grunt of the GC and Xbox.

There are two main models of PS2 - the standard black one, and the newer silver one. Apart from some cosmetic changes, a quieter fan, and a new IR receiver for a DVD remote, there is very little difference between the two.

## Nintendo Gamecube

Nintendo have the longest history with games out of the Big Three, and it shows in the care and attention they pay to their titles. Although there are perhaps fewer GC titles than the PS2 and Xbox, it is fair to say that there is a higher proportion of gems. As ever, most of these (such as Zelda: The Wind Waker and Metroid Prime) are Nintendo made, and will only be available on the GC.

Technically superior to the PS2, multifunction games are generally better played on the GC than the Sony machine, although in a few cases the lower button count of the GC controller can cause a couple of problems. If you want online gaming, then the GC is not the choice for you, as there is currently only one UK online title - Phantasy Star Online I & II (although a couple of others are on the way). LAN playable games like Mario Kart and Kirby Air Ride can be routed over the 'net with a tool called Warp Pipe, however.

Don't be put off by the "kiddy" face on the GC and its games - cute graphics do not mean a child's game. Viewtiful Joe, for example, is rock hard.





## Microsoft Xbox

There are two main selling points for the Xbox that would make you favour it over any other console listed here. The first, and probably most important, is the online gaming with Xbox Live! (see **ugvm07** for the full lowdown). Although the PS2 has full online connectivity, and even the GC has a couple of 'net playable games, Microsoft really seem to have gotten it right with the Xbox. The whole infrastructure of the online system beats Sony's hands down, from the one-gamertag-for-all-games to friends lists, downloadable content, no need to buy an adapter, and voice chat as standard. Sadly (or not, depending on how you feel about them), EA's sports titles such as FIFA are not playable over Xbox Live due to Microsoft and EA politics. However, there is a great range of other sports games (such as Top Spin and Links 2004) as well as other titles to play online.

Secondly, the Xbox is the most powerful of the three home machines, which generally means the Xbox versions of games are better graphically and sonically.

In terms of the type of game, again, most genres are catered for, but there is a lack of any "fun" Mario-type games, and the platformers in general are pretty lacking. It seems to have too many driving games too. The Xbox's best titles include Knights of the Old Republic and Project Gotham Racing 2.

## Prices

RRP: £130, but generally £120 in the shops. There are loads of deals around to get you a console and a couple of games for around £130 too, which is ideal. There's no need to buy a memory card, as the Xbox lets you store saved games on the internal hard drive, but you'll need one to take saves round a mate's (at a cost of about £25). Xbox Live will cost you in the region of £35 to set up and subscribe for a year.

## Nintendo Game Boy Advance

For travelling gamers, there is only one serious choice - the Game Boy Advance. The N-Gage proved itself a flop even before release, and nice as the GP32 and Wonderswan are, there are a lack of games for them.

The GBA comes in two flavours: the Game Gear-but-smaller shaped GBA, and the fold-up GBA SP (shown right). The latter is equipped with a built in battery and comes with a charger, as well as a screen light (which fixes visibility problems with the original GBA).

In terms of software, the GBA plays host to a HUGE collections of games, with something for everyone. As well as playing GBA titles, it also plays original mono Game Boy and Game Boy Colour cartridges, boosting the handheld's game-count into four figures. GBA-only titles are generally (graphically and sonically) similar to SNES-era games. In fact, one of the downsides to the machine is that many games are ports of SNES (and Megadrive) titles. Thankfully, they're usually only ports of good games! Original titles such as Advance Wars, Sonic Pinball Party and Pokémon Ruby and Sapphire are must-buys.

An added bonus with the GBA is that not only can you play some multiplayer games with just one cart (unlike the GB/GBC), but you can also link it to a Gamecube to add extra features to some GC games. These are often in the form of downloadable mini-games from GC games to the GBA (as in Animal Crossing and PSO), or using the GBA as a controller with a secret screen (as in the case of the GC's PacMan VS game). It can also be used as a controller for the Game Boy Player add-on for the 'Cube.



## Prices

RRP: £90, but some shops will give you a game or some accessories with that. A non-SP GBA will cost you nearer £55 from those retailers with stock left. If you have a Gamecube, a GBA-GC lead should cost no more than £15, and a GBA-GBA link cable for multiplayer games is around £10.

**seconds?**

PS2 owners would do best to look at a GC as a second console, as it provides the largest amount of quality non-PS2 titles. Xbox owners too would perhaps benefit most from GC, as a PS2 offers little a GC and Xbox combined wouldn't. Similarly, GC owners

would get more from an Xbox than a PS2. Everyone, however, needs to own a GBA! GBA owners will find that the GC link-up is a bonus, but a PS2 will offer the largest range of titles to play. The best solution, of course, is to buy all four...

Parties, hang-overs, vomit, New Year resolutions and the **ugvm** Awards. Yes it is that time of the year once again...

# The 2nd Annual ugvm Awards!

Dusted off, revamped and expanded, we present the voting stage of the **ugvm** Awards. After great deliberation (and bloody hell, was it hard work agreeing), the **ugvm** team has finally settled on the nominees for this year. That's our job done; the rest

of the hard work is up to you, the readers, to vote for the games and companies which have mattered to you the most during 2003 - not only the best, but the biggest disappointments. You'll see the nominees listed by category below:

## Best Game Boy Advance Game

Wario Ware, Inc  
Advance Wars 2  
Final Fantasy Tactics Advance  
Mario and Luigi  
Sonic Pinball Party  
Pokémon Ruby / Sapphire  
Castlevania: Aria of Sorrow  
Super Monkey Ball Jr  
Sonic Advance 2  
Metroid Fusion

## Best Playstation 2 Game

Prince of Persia: Sands of Time  
EyeToy: Play  
Pro Evolution Soccer 3  
Amplitude  
Jak II  
Virtua Fighter 4: Evolution  
Time Crisis 3  
Gregory Horror Show  
Sly Raccoon  
Dark Chronical

## Best Import Game

Border Down (DC)  
Atsumare! Made In Wario (GC)  
Xenosaga (PS2)  
Disgaea: Hour Of Darkness (PS2)  
Fire Emblem (GBA)  
King Of Fighters 2002 (DC)  
Metal Slug 3 (PS2)  
Cubic Lode Runner (PS2/GC)  
Donkey Konga (GC)  
Initial D Special Stage (PS2)

## Best Gamecube Game

Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker  
Viewtiful Joe  
F-Zero GX  
Mario Kart: Double Dash!!  
Metroid Prime  
Super Monkey Ball 2  
1080°  
Mario Party 5  
Wario World  
Billy Hatcher and the Giant Egg

## Best Xbox Game

Knights of the Old Republic  
Rainbow Six 3  
Project Gotham Racing 2  
Top Spin  
Midtown Madness 3  
Ghost Recon: Island Thunder  
Crimson Skies  
Return to Castle Wolfenstein  
Links 2004  
Panzer Dragoon Orta

## Best Publisher

Ubisoft  
EA  
Nintendo  
Microsoft  
Sony  
Capcom  
Infogrames  
Sega  
SCi  
Sierra

## Best PC Game

GTA: Vice City  
Sim City 4  
Call of Duty  
Tron 2.0  
Homeworld 2  
Halo  
Rise of Nations  
Railroad Tycoon 3  
Championship Manager 03/04  
Max Payne II

## Best Multiformat Game

Soul Calibur II  
Burnout 2  
Tiger Woods 2004  
Tony Hawk's Underground  
The Simpsons: Hit and Run  
Conflict Desert Storm 2  
XIII  
Prince of Persia: Sands of Time  
LotR: The Return of the King  
SSX 3

## Biggest Disappointment

Nokia N-Gage  
Half-Life 2 delay  
Halo 2 delay  
True Crime: Streets of L.A.  
Mario Kart: Double Dash!!  
Poor Sequels / Yearly Updates  
Star Wars: Galaxies  
Game prices still too high  
Closure of many small developers  
Paper games mags still being crap

## How To Vote

Pick **ONE** game from each of the nine categories, and choose your overall Game of the Year from any

title in the first two columns. Put them all in an email, marking clearly which game is for which category, and send it to **editor@ugvm.org.uk** with the

subject **VOTE** by **January 16th 2004**. The results will be published in the next issue of **ugvm**. You do not need to vote in every category.

# GBA Mega-Test

**The Rev** takes time out from his busy schedule to play and quick-review almost one million Game Boy Advance games for us. One after another.

Somehow, over the years, I've acquired a lot of Gameboy Advance games. But, gentle reader, everyone knows that the only games on the GBA are Advance Wars, Wario Ware and lazy SNES ports. So what games have I got? And how good are they?

I've sorted my GBA games into alphabetical order. I've charged up my SP. And I've set myself a mission. I'm going to start at Advance GTA and I'm going to work my way through to Yu-Gi-Oh. (With Game & Watch Advance missing, because I've lost it. Grrr.) I'll let you know how long I play each game for and how much I enjoyed it. Also, I've got a wallet big enough to hold six GBA games and I'll need to fill that up at the end of this test.

It's 3:15pm on Saturday afternoon. Villa have lost, so I'm not in a good mood. Can the magic of gaming cheer me? Lock and load, people, we're going in...

## Advance GTA



Racing game with lots of cars and parts. Previously: One of the first games I got with my original Japanese GBA. As such, I've played it for a fair few hours before, but I've not touched it in well over a year. Notes: I start off in Beginner's Class, because I've not played for ages. I win the first race

easily, so move straight on up to Professional Class, where I seem to have got stuck before... And I'm stuck now. I can't do better than fifth. But I don't care, because the game is great fun. The handling model is a little simplistic and the opponents are just mobile markers showing your progression, but you can see what you're doing and it's tremendously exciting to skid round hairpin bends. I like this. A lot. I'd forgotten how much. A rediscovery. But I have a huge amount of games to get through, so I'm going to leave this for now. It's not so addictive that I can't leave it.

**Quick Rating: 4/5 Time Played: 14 minutes.**

## Advance Wars



Turn-based strategy with lots of tanks. Previously: I've played it for a fair few hours, but I've barely scratched the surface of the game. Notes: The classic. I boot it up and play one quick campaign mission. I'm Max, I'm fighting Olaf and it's Mission Six. My mind isn't on the game for the first few turns

and I make some stupid mistakes, but I manage to scrape a B for the mission. I could easily play more, but so many games, so little time. But, man, I buy too many games. When there are games of this quality around that I've never finished, why do I buy new ones? Advance Wars scientifically proves one thing. I'm an idiot.

**Quick Rating: 5/5 Time Played: 29 minutes**

## Castlevania: Aria Of Sorrow



Kill monsters, explore a castle and jump around. Previously: I've played it for a while, but come not close to completing it. Notes: I remember being stuck last time I played this, not knowing where to go. So I start it up and wander around at random. You know, the whipping and jumping is great fun, but it

seems a bit directionless. Until! I find a place I've not been to before. Except after one screen I just find a big stone door I can't through. So it's back to the nearest save point and an end to this

session. I will return to it, it's an excellent game, but at the moment I'm really not sure where to go or what to do.

**Quick Rating: 4/5 Time Played: 13 minutes**

## Castlevania: Circle Of The Moon



Kill monsters, explore a castle and jump around, again. Previously: An early purchase, so I played it a lot. (I had a lamp behind the sofa that lit the old GBA up perfectly.) I think I've done everything but beat the final boss. Notes: Seems a bit sluggish after playing the other Castlevania,

but not too bad. Astonishingly, given how long it's been since I last played, I can remember where the big boss is. So I get there, after having to relearn the special moves to get to high places and break blocks, click through the dialogue and die, quickly and horribly. How am I meant to avoid those attacks? I've no idea. Anyway, when the Game Over screen comes up I decide not to try again. Hmm. I really should work out how to kill him at some point. And there's still loads of the castle I can't get to, for some reason. I'm curious now.

**Quick Rating: 4/5 Time Played: 10 minutes**

## Castlevania: Harmony Of Dissonance



Yes, that's right, you kill monsters, explore a castle and jump around. Previously: I really can't remember. I know I enjoyed it, but I'm pretty sure I got distracted and never finished it. Clock says I've played for five hours. Notes: Not quite sure what I'm doing and I'm very confused for a couple of

minutes until I remember the unique castle layout in this game. I wander around, I find a boss, I kill it (on the third attempt), I wander around some more, find some dead ends and then get killed returning to the save room from a dead end. Which is a good enough place to stop, I think. That's the Castlevania GBA games out of the way now.

**Quick Rating: 4/5 Time Played: 20 minutes**

## Chu Chu Rocket



Puzzle game where you try to save mice from cats. Previously: Never got on with the main mode, really, but the puzzle mode made my brain hurt for a while. Notes: So I start it up and find the puzzles I haven't yet completed. I do four of them without much trouble, well, without too much trouble. And then I find

one that's obviously completely impossible, so I stop playing. I mean, the cat starts on the same path as the mice and you can't make them do anything the cat's not going to do and there's obviously a mistake that nobody else has ever noticed and... That's annoying me now. I'd go back, but I have more games to play. This mega-test thing was a stupid idea. I thought I'd find a load of bad GBA games that I could throw away within two minutes and never play again, but instead I'm rediscovering how good a lot of GBA games are. Look at the scores. Let's hope some bad games turn up soon, eh readers?

**Quick Rating: 4/5 Time Played: 24 minutes**

## Colin McRae Rally 2.0

Rally racing... er, that's it. Previously: I've played it a little, but not



much. Last time I played it was earlier today, though. Notes: First impressions aren't good. Earlier, when I played it, I didn't like it at all. The draw distance is terrible and I couldn't keep the car on the road for more than two seconds at a time. But, trying it again now, something happens and suddenly I am at one with my vehicle. The draw distance ceases to matter, the amazing disappearing trackside detail ceases to matter, all that matters is the car. I storm the French rally with ease and am so exhausted afterwards that I don't hesitate to turn off the GBA. So, I'm not sure how to score this. It's either far too hard or far too easy... or it gets harder later into the game and it's a great GBA racer. I think I can only mark based on how much I just enjoyed myself, so here's yet another...

**Quick Rating: 4/5 Time Played: 17 minutes**

## Defender Of The Crown



Medieval strategy with swords and jousting and stuff. Previously: I was very envious of this when my mate had an Amiga and I was stuck with my Spectrum. I've not played it since then, though, and the cartridge has never seen the inside of my GBA. Notes: Um... what just happened? There was a map

and some jousting and men with swords and I bought a catapult but couldn't move it and then I thought that maybe I'd worked out the kind of thing that was going on but then my castle got burned down and I saw some credits and back to the main menu. My head hurts. I'm sure it would make more sense with more play, but that was really quite confusing as it was. (Yes, I do have a manual... somewhere in one of my 'old game stuff' boxes. So, effectively, no manuals exist for any games in this test.)

**Quick Rating: 2/5 Time Played: 15 minutes**

## Doom II



Shotgun, demons, first person. Come on, you know what it is. Previously: I've played this GBA version a little, but not too much. I've spent hundreds of hours with the PC version over the years. Notes: It's technically impressive, oh yes, even if the sheer brownness makes it difficult to tell wall

from floor at times. But the greatest thing about Doom on the PC was the controls. The controls are what make it worth playing even today. The controls on the GBA don't work and it makes playing the game too painful.

**Quick Rating: 1/5 Time Played: 6 minutes**

## F-Zero

Futuristic hover racing. Previously: The game I got with my GBA. As such, I played it a lot and I adored it. But I've not touched it for a long, long time. Notes: I'd forgotten that the menus were in Japanese. I find myself in time trial mode, I think. And I die very quickly. So then I go back and find the main racing mode. (Which is surprise! the first option on the main menu.) Looks like I got as far as Master mode when I played before, so I try that. And, obviously, I fail horribly. I used to love this game, but I think it's been too long. If I wanted to play again I should probably create a new ID and start from scratch. But that's never going to happen. It was a good game, but it should be left in my past. You, however, might well have some fun with it.

**Quick Rating: 3/5 Time Played: 5 minutes**

## Golden Sun



Standard Japanese RPG thing. Previously: I played it for an hour or two, something like that. And then I left it alone. Notes: Oh, my saved data says I played for 27 minutes. Anyway, I load it up and wander round town. Talk to people. See the worst excuse for not being able to follow a certain path ever.

Decide that if I ever want to play this game that I need to start again from the beginning. But I'm not in an RPG mood right now. I'm not sure what rating to give it. Giving it a mark based purely on how much enjoyment I just got would be grossly unfair, given that I

didn't give it much of a chance. But I'm feeling unfair. Oh, and some white noise I think it was meant to be rushing water - really, really annoyed me, like fingers on blackboard. So...

**Quick Rating: 1/5 Time Played: 6 minutes**

## Gradius Advance

Horizontally scrolling shooter. Previously: I've played it a little bit, but not much. Notes: Oh my! It's brilliant! Rock hard and you lose all your power-ups when you die, but it's great and fantastic and exciting and you get to shoot things Pow! Pow! Pow! and everything. I've always been a fan of vertically scrolling shooters, but this is finally making me see the beauty of the horizontal. Why didn't I notice this genius when I first got the game? Oh, and, yes, it does save high scores.

**Quick Rating: 5/5 Time Played: 25 minutes**

## Hamarto: Ham-Ham Heartbreak

Adventure where your hamster avatar learns new actions by learning words. Previously: I'd started it based on reviews saying it was cute but a good game but it hadn't grabbed me at all. Notes: Well, that's quite embarrassing. I actually had quite a nice time playing it, although it was bit too cute even for me. I found myself winning a few times and idly wishing there was a chainsaw or rocket launcher lying around somewhere. Anyway, it's not embarrassing that I enjoyed myself - it's embarrassing that I only stopped playing because I got completely stuck.

**Quick Rating: 3/5 Time Played: 23 minutes**

## Jurassic Park: Park Builder



Build a theme park with dinosaurs in. Previously: Never played before. Notes: I'm proud of myself. I've made dinosaurs and a park and finally I even worked out how to get guests into the park. And once I'd worked out what to do and how to do it, the idea of actually doing it seemed very unappealing.

The graphics aren't good enough to give you a sense of achievement. In Operation Genesis you've got lovingly detailed herds of dinosaurs and stomping carnivores. In Rollercoaster Tycoon your majestic new coaster rises high above the park and people jump with joy as they leave. In Park Builder odd little sprites that you know are meant to be people and dinosaurs zoom around your isometric park at a hundred miles an hour. It just doesn't work.

**Quick Rating: 2/5 Time Played: 17 minutes**

## King Of Fighters EX Neo Blood



2D fighting it's the Shinarui way. Previously: Never played before, got it in the Game sale the other day. Notes: I don't know what's wrong. But something is. Something's very wrong. No flow to it, no control. I just can't stand to play it and I really can't tell you why. There's just something very wrong there.

I'm going back to Gals Fighter.

**Quick Rating: 1/5 Time Played: 3 minutes**

## Konami Krazy Racers



Kart racing game, funnily enough. Previously: Played a fair bit before Mario Kart came along. Notes: I'd forgotten how good the main theme song was. It's stuck in my head now. And it seems I'd done everything I could in the game except get an S licence. So, after winning one of the cups on Normal,

I went for the licence. No luck. I'm rubbish. Good game though. Quick, clean, fun, colourful... but slightly uninspiring.

**Quick Rating: 3/5 Time Played: 14 minutes**

## Kuru Kuru Kururin

Guide a rotating stick through some mazes. Previously: Played it a bit, but I seem to remember being rubbish at it. Notes: Yeah, I'm

## Feature

useless at it. Can't even get past an early level in the easy mode. I suspect someone, somewhere, has decided to play an amusing joke on me by pretending the easy mode is easy, when in fact it's impossible. Yes, it must be a conspiracy. There's no way I could just be really terrible at the game. But I now feel an urge to return, to show that I can beat it, despite their evil plans. One day, oh yes, one day...

**Quick Rating: 4/5 Time Played: 6 minutes**

### Legend Of Zelda: A Link To The Past



Top-down action adventure. One of a little-known series of games. Previously: I'd got to a dungeon and remembered how annoying Zelda dungeons can be. Notes: I wandered around the dungeon until I died. I couldn't find anywhere I hadn't been, except through doors I needed the Big Key for. There was a pot surrounded by swirly things that looked odd, but I didn't know how to get to it. Apart from that, I'm stumped.

**Quick Rating: 3/5 Time Played: 19 minutes**

### Mario Kart Super Circuit

Complete rip-off of Konami's Krazy Racers. Previously: I'd played it a fair bit, I think. Notes: Two jumps that send me back half a lap each and an eighth place finish and I'm so annoyed after one race that I turn the GBA off. Stupid game.

**Quick Rating: 1/5 Time Played: 3 minutes**

### Megaman Battle Network 2

Some RPG type thing, I think. Previously: I'd sat through cut scenes for a while until I could save, then saved. Notes: Oh, after some confusion and boring wandering around and talking, we finally find out about the battle system. And suddenly things get interesting. Interesting enough to keep me fighting until I complete the first quest that's been set for me, anyway. Not a classic by any means, I don't think, but I could get addicted to this. That doesn't mean I'll ever play it again, though.

**Quick Rating: 3/5 Time Played: 42 minutes**

### Metroid Fusion



Like Castlevania, only not as good and set in space. Previously: Played it for a little while, but not long. Notes: Too hard. Far too hard. Also, next time I must remember not to save when I'm low on health. Stupid bloody game.

**Quick Rating: 2/5 Time Played: 8 minutes**

### Monster Rancher Advance



A cock-fighting simulator, with made up animals rather than cocks. Previously: Hadn't played it much, due to it being a pale shadow of the PS2 version. Notes: That was actually quite fun. I won a battle and learned a new skill and raised my monster (some sort of eyeball with a mouth) and generally had a good time. I stopped playing mainly because of the game that's coming up next...

**Quick Rating: 3/5 Time Played: 15 minutes**

### Monster Rancher Advance 2



Same as Monster Rancher Advance. Previously: Hoped it would be better than Monster Rancher Advance, but it seems to be basically the same. My monster was rubbish, too. Notes: Well, that was a shock.

The game is basically the same - the main change I know of comes further into the game than I've ever got but somehow it turned out to be great fun. I've just had nigh on an hour of excellent fun. My monster (Zack, a wolf type thing) got from E rank to D rank and... and, well, that's about all that happened, but it was great. There's something very satisfying

about raising your own monster and then using him to beat up other monsters. But it's a horrible game when your monster fails training and loses every match, which I think was the problem when I last played. Oh, and it's now 12:35am on Sunday morning. Never say I'm not dedicated.

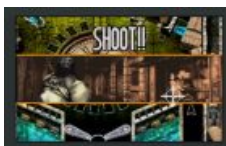
**Quick Rating: 4/5 Time Played: 54 minutes**

### Ninja Cop

Bionic Commando crossed with Shinobi. Previously: A fairly recent purchase but already one of my favourite GBA games. I love it, despite being awful at it. Notes: I don't know why this game is so great. It's a just 2D platform game with a couple of gimmicks from old games added to it. It's got a stupid name. And yet there's just something about it that's made me fall in love. Please buy it. I want a sequel at some point - though I pray that they never do a 3D update on a next-gen console. And now it's 1:00am and I'm going to bed. I need sleep before I play the next game, whatever it is. I'm not going to check now. You, though, can just flick your eyes downwards to find out.

**Quick Rating: 5/5 Time Played: 20 minutes**

### Pinball Of The Dead



Zombie pinball. Previously: I'd played it a fair bit, actually. Notes: It's 9:28am, I'm out of bed, let's get back to the GBA, shall we? Despite having played this game for a few hours, I've only tried one of the tables. So, as it's a special occasion, I decide to try a new one. And it's fun enough. I enjoy myself. But when the game ends (with a high score obtained simply because the game generously gave me a couple of random bonuses) I find the GBA very easy to turn off.

**Quick Rating: 3/5 Time Played: 9 minutes**

### Pinobee: Wings Of Adventure



Zooming platform game. Previously: One of the first non-Japanese games I got. Played it for a fair while, but it was rather overshadowed by other titles. Not played it for years. Notes: That was slightly odd. I didn't know what I was doing, really, so I flew round the huge maze-like level until I got to the end. Then I got sent to a boss level and defeated the boss easily and, um, that's the end of that. Game over, credits seen. Chances of going back to find the other endings? More or less zero, I'd say.

**Quick Rating: 3/5 Time Played: 14 minutes**

### Pocket Music

Music-making tool. Previously: I've never tried this before. Notes: Nice interface in four minutes of play I made a basic track easily enough - but if I turn my GBA up loud enough to hear the music I get horrible background noise. Hmm. I wonder if there's something wrong with my GBA? I'll have to find out, because I can't live with that white noise. No way.

**Quick Rating: 2/5 Time Played: 4 minutes**

### Pokémon Sapphire



Monster-raising RPG. Previously: I'm about five hours in. Notes: Longest session so far and it was a real struggle to turn it off. I knew I had to. I've got a lot of games to get through today but I still wanted to level up enough to beat the next gym leader. I tried

during the session, but he kicked my arse. His Machop can kill any of my Pokémon in one hit, the bastard. I had a load of Normal type Pokémon and I was told they'd be weak against the types of Pokémon the boss uses, so I had to replace them with some Pokémon at lower levels. So now I've got a pretty underpowered team that I really need to level up. Not sure where the best place to do that is... You're not interested, are you? You really don't care. Okay, okay. But, look, if you've not tried one of the Pokémon games before then play one soon, okay? You might well not like it, but if it



clicks then you'll love it. It would be a shame to deny it to yourself just because there's a terrible cartoon based on the game.

**Quick Rating: 5/5 Time Played: 79 minutes**

## Puyo Pop



Puzzle game. A bit like Tetris, but different. Previously: Played it quite a lot, but I'm no good at it. Notes: I actually do quite well compared to normal. A few nice chains and the storyline hasn't got any less mad since I last played. It's a fun little puzzle game, it's got nice graphics and it saves high scores. I'm damning with faint praise, I know. I really don't mean to. The storyline made me laugh out loud again and there's not many games that can do that.

**Quick Rating: 3/5 Time Played: 14 minutes**

## Sonic Advance



Fast-paced 2D platforming. Previously: I've played it a fair bit, a lot of time spent in the Tiny Chao Garden. Notes: Start playing as Amy, I don't seem to have used her before. She's a bit rubbish and she doesn't control very well. First boss kills me and I'm so annoyed the game gets ripped from the GBA. I hate bosses.

**Quick Rating: 2/5 Time Played: 5 minutes**

## Sonic Advance 2



More fast-paced 2D platforming. Previously: Hadn't played it that much, as I'd found it rather uninspiring. Notes: That's more like it! I use Sonic in this one and it doesn't look like I've played it much, as I'm only halfway across the map. I go through the ice level, and get to the boss and then die. But, crucially, I have fun doing it and even the Boss fight was quite fun. Ah, much better. Still easy to turn off, mind you.

**Quick Rating: 4/5 Time Played: 17 minutes**

## Super Ghouls 'N' Ghosts

Rock-hard jumping and killing. Previously: I'd played many times in short bursts. Never got off the first level. Notes: It's so hard it shouldn't be any fun. But it is fun. It's got it. No, I don't know what 'it' is. Precise controls? The way it always tells you it's going to kill you before it does? The way you know every single death was your fault? The way playing the same tiny section over and over doesn't get boring? I don't know. But this is probably one of the best games ever to put on for a quick go, and therefore it's a perfect game to carry around in your pocket.

**Quick Rating: 5/5 Time Played: 7 minutes**

## Super Mario World: Super Mario Advance 2



Classic 2D platformer. Previously: I've played this for hour upon hour over the years, but I had trouble with the GBA version, for some reason, and never finished it. Notes: Well, I get off one level, then die one too many times on the next and turn the GBA off in anger. It's Super Mario World, people. What more do you need to know? Every single person on the planet has played it. It's the law. I played it most in a room with a purple shagpile carpet. Where have you played it most?

**Quick Rating: 3/5 Time Played: 9 minutes**

## Super Monkey Ball Jr.

Torture monkeys by making them roll around floating platforms inside balls and then throw them off into oblivion. Mwa ha ha! Die my pretties! Die! Previously: My most played GBA game of the last week. Notes: No, it doesn't have analogue control, obviously. Get over it. The GBA control system still works very well and the game's as frustrating and addictive as the Gamecube original. It's an amazing achievement and one of the best portable games ever.

And I just got further than I ever have before in Advanced Mode. So hurrah. Now lunch!

**Quick Rating: 5/5 Time Played: 24 minutes**

## Super Puzzle Fighter 2



Puzzle game. A bit like Puyo Pop, but different. Previously: I've played it a bit, but I'm astonishingly bad at it. I die early, the puzzle levels are impossible, that sort of thing. Notes: That was more fun than I expected. No, not lunch, this game. I've been underestimating a lot of games in this test. It's really good to remind myself how good some of these games are. Is this better than Puyo Pop, though? You know, I really can't choose between them. I might have to later, but for now, I'll give this the same score. Plus an extra point for having Ryu in it.

**Quick Rating: 4/5 Time Played: 16 minutes**

## Super Street Fighter II Turbo Revival



The classic 2D fighter. Previously: I picked it up cheap for nostalgia value. I've not actually played it much. Notes: I spent my student loan on this game, back in the day. Well, this game, Starfox, Striker and the hardware to play them on. Hundreds of pounds. It wasn't even the Turbo version. No Fei-Long for me. But how is it now? Well, it's okay. It would be better if you didn't have to use the triggers, I think. I played until Blanka killed my Ryu. I hate Blanka.

**Quick Rating: 2/5 Time Played: 5 minutes**

## Street Fighter Alpha 3



One of the millions of sequels to the above. Previously: I've enjoyed it on a technical level, but never really played it much. Notes: More proof that I'm an idiot. The letter T doesn't come after the letter U. Chronology took a hold me when I filed this, it seems. Anyway, let's have a play... Okay, I'm sorry.

I'm sure given a Game Boy Player and a Hori digital pad I could have great fun with this, but I can't right now. It's no worse than the other one in terms of controls, but the difficulty level is set higher. I could adjust it, I'm sure, but I turned the GBA off in frustration. So, I'm going to have to give this a remarkably unfair...

**Quick Rating: 1/5 Time Played: 2 Minutes**

## Tactics Ogre: The Knight Of Lodis



Squad-based tactical fighting and endless conversations. Previously: I'd played it for a bit and been very confused. And that was with the manual by my side. I've lost the manual now. Notes: I find myself at the start of a fight. But the interface is fairly easy to manage and I have good time running around hitting things with my sword. (I have allies, but they're not under my control. That comes later in the game, I'd imagine.) So, the battle is won and then there's a talky sequence full of names I don't recognise. It baffles me so much that I decide that if I play the game again I'm going to have start from the beginning. It looks like a decent game, but it's a decent game that should be played another day.

**Quick Rating: 3/5 Time Played: 16 minutes**

## Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2



Ride a skateboard round some isometric levels and do tricks. Previously: I played this a lot when I first got it. I was worried, after seeing a video, that it might just be technically impressive, but it turned out to be a fun game, too. Notes: What's going on? I can't tell how to land tricks. I'm sure my board's pointing the right way, but it's obviously not as I keep

## Feature

falling over. And the isometric view is hurting my brain. Very odd. I used to love this game. Now it seems unplayable. Anyway, I can't be bothered spending any time investigating this spooky mystery. It's on to the next game.

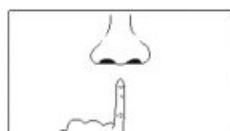
**Quick Rating:** 2/5 **Time Played:** 3 minutes

### Ultimate Brain Games

Collection of board games like Chess and Reversi and Connect Four. Previously: I only got this yesterday. I turned the music off, designed a face for my avatar and then played two games of Connect Four... er, Four In A Row - both of which I lost. Notes: You know, eighty-two minutes ago I didn't know how to play dominos. But now I do. Turned to be an addictive little bugger. Either I'm the least lucky man ever, or there are layers of hidden strategy I'm missing. I won three games and lost about fourteen. And because the cart's got battery back up those stats will now be saved forever. I would tell you what the other games in the collection are like, but I didn't get to around playing them.

**Quick Rating:** 5/5 **Time Played:** 82 minutes

### Wario Ware, Inc.



A million mini-games played in short bursts. Previously: The game I've played most this year, on any format. Notes: Thrilling mode is very difficult to adjust to after playing dominos for over an hour. But I still get my third best score ever. Yeah, so that's only

fourteen points, you want to make something of it?

**Quick Rating:** 5/5 **Time Played:** 8 minutes

### Yoshi's Island: Super Mario Advance 3

Another classic Nintendo platformer. Previously: Never played this on the SNES and haven't played the GBA as much as I should have. Notes: One more level done. I jumped, I swallowed, I shat out eggs. Just another normal day in the world of Yoshi. To be honest, I'm getting a bit tired of GBA games. It's 5pm now. All I've done is play GBA games and write this all day, with a short break for lunch. Just one more game to go and then I shall be free.

**Quick Rating:** 4/5 **Time Played:** 12 minutes

### Yu-Gi-Oh Worldwide Edition



Collectible card game simulator. Previously: Was addicted to this for a few weeks earlier this year, haven't played it since. Notes: Takes me a while to remember how to play, but I chose a weak opponent so I win the duel and get a new pack of cards. Very nice.

But, really, I've played too many games this weekend and I'm glad to be able to stop.

**Quick Rating:** 3/5 **Time Played:** 10 minutes

So, that's that. Turns out that the Game Boy Advance actually has a lot of very decent games. All that's left now is for me to choose the games I'm going to carry around with me. My wallet can hold six and I can keep one in the GBA, so I have to choose seven. I won't choose the 'best' seven, as different games are good for different situations. I need ones I can play for hours and ones I can play for three minutes at a time.

A bit of sorting out later and I've got it narrowed down to fourteen, losing decent games like Yoshi's Island, Sonic Advance 2 and Advance GTA along the way. Now, this is where the fun starts. The candidates are Gradius Advance, Super Monkey Ball Jr, Pokémon Sapphire, Ultimate Brain Games, Super Ghouls 'N' Ghosts, Ninja Cop, Advance Wars, Wario Ware, Super Puzzle Fighter 2, Puyo Pop, Chu Chu Rocket, Colin McRae 2, Monster Rancher 2 and Castlevania: Aria Of Sorrow.

I need Ninja Cop, Super Monkey Ball Jr and Ultimate Brain Games. They're my latest games and I love them. I need Pokemon too, I think. I'm itching to get leveled up and give that gym leader a thrashing. Okay, I can live without Colin McRae 2. It's good, yes, but it's not necessary. Out of the puzzle games, Chu Chu Rocket will be the easiest to live without. Castlevania: Aria Of Sorrow is one I want to play, but I don't need it. It can go. Reluctantly, I think Super Ghouls 'N' Ghosts can go. It fills roughly the same need as Gradius Advance and it's Gradius I want to concentrate on for now. Which I guess means Gradius is in.

So, that's two spots left and five games to choose from. Wario Ware can go. Best game this year, maybe, but I've played it to death lately. It might be good to give it a break. I don't need both Puyo Pop and Super Puzzle Fighter 2, but I do need one of them. And the winner is... Super Puzzle Fighter 2. I've seen hints today that I might be able to get better at it. The final choice, then, is between Advance Wars and Monster Rancher 2. Now, that's an unfair contest if ever there was one. Advance Wars is in.

So the final list Advance Wars, Gradius Advance, Super Puzzle Fighter 2, Super Monkey Ball Jr, Ultimate Brain Games, Ninja Cop and Pokémon Sapphire.

Great games, all, but I'm sick to death of the GBA and all its little cartridges and I hope I never see any of them again. I need a bath and the washing up's sitting in the sink. But, well, I suppose a quick game of dominos might not be such a bad idea.

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# Christmas NiGHTS

**Jim Taylor** thinks that they're dark and cold.

As it's the season to be jolly, it seems only natural that we review a Christmas themed game. And what better choice than the seminal Saturn classic Christmas NiGHTS (yes, it is capitalised like that).

Christmas NiGHTS was given away free when you purchased a Saturn bundle or when you bought two Sega games back in 1996. It was also subsequently given away free with the Official Sega Saturn magazine in December 1997. And of course, as with anything free, it now goes on eBay for up to £10. So what do you now get for your money?

Before the Christmas goodness, an explanation of NiGHTS itself: you play as either Elliot or Claris, two children who travel to the world of dreams where they meet the eponymous NiGHTS. In this dream world you must collect four types of dream energy representing purity, wisdom, hope and intelligence in order to, as corny as it sounds, help return joyous spirit to the citizens of Twin Seeds. You can accomplish this through entering the Ideya Temple and becoming NiGHTS, then flying round the world of Spring Valley, collecting enough blue chips to open the Ideya Capture and free the dream energy caught within. Then the fun continues, as you can continue racking up the points until you make it back to the Ideya Palace before time runs out. You'll then be graded between A and F, and can start after the next dream energy on a new course. After you've collected all four Ideyas, you'll be taken to face one of the Nightmares (the end of level boss).

The beauty of NiGHTS lies not in the relatively straightforward target of the game but in what you do once you've freed each dream energy. Sure, you can head straight for the Ideya palace to start chasing the next dream energy; but it's far more rewarding, and fun, to fly round the level attempting to rack up as many points and links as possible - a link is gained with every ring you fly through or every item you collect, the more you link the higher you score.

But enough about that, this is the **ugvm** Christmas special - what makes this game so Christmassy? At first glance Christmas NiGHTS is not all that different from plain old NiGHTS. However, that depends on the time of year you play it. Play the game on April 1st and you can play as Reala (NiGHTS's nemesis); November, January or February will give you Winter NiGHTS with snow on the levels; and January 1st will give you New Year NiGHTS (which is the same as Winter but with a Happy New Year message on the title screen). But if you play it in December you find the biggest differences: amongst other things the level will be covered with lights and decorations, the Ideya Capture becomes a tree, and you are presented with opening and closing movies.

Big differences between the full game and this is that you have just the one level to traverse, although this is also playable in reverse; also, you can unlock a number of Christmas presents ranging from a variety of images and sketches to some neat features including one placing Sonic in the game - Sonic Team were experimenting using the NiGHTS engine to produce a Saturn Sonic game, and displayed the results here.

Taken on its own Christmas NiGHTS is not that big a package; there's only so many times you can play through the same level and only so many presents to unlock, after which point the only target is high score beating. However as a demo disc it gives you a good taste of the full game, and as a bonus disc to the already fantastic NiGHTS it's a wonderful complement. Even if you only bring it out once a year it's a nice little treat. While it can be overly schmaltzy, you can forgive it because, after all, it is Christmas.

5/5





# ugvm Recommends...

It is a well known fact that over the Christmas period we will all go out and buy stacks of games. Probably. It is also likely that we may be swayed into buying games just because they're on offer in the January sales, even though reviews have been less than favourable. That's just the way it is. However, armed with this quick list of recommendations from **ugvm** staff and readers, you can attempt to bypass the tat and spend your cash on something more worthwhile.

## Neil Hopkins

My name is Neil, and for Christmas, I recommend that you buy **Dungeons and Dragons Heroes** for the Xbox.

Why, you might ask? It has had some decidedly average reviews, and it is a simplistic game with little of the depth that sophisticated Xboxers have come to expect. One word - multiplayer. Switch off the Queen's speech, make sure you have some snacks and drinks to hand, plug in four controllers and settle down for the best co-operative multiplayer experience since Halo. The only arguments that you are likely to have are who gets the comfy chair and who sits on the floor as this game has the potential to keep you playing until the New Year.



## Charles Littlewood

My name is Charles and for Christmas I recommend you buy **Mario Sunshine**.

Perhaps the most criticised game to come out in the last few years, sadly it seems to have become the new cool to dislike Mario Sunshine. Where that dislike comes from bewilders me, as it really is one of the most enjoyable games that has come out this generation. Many people complain that it is inferior to Mario 64 and that the game's seaside setting took it too far away from its roots. That may be true, but you will find a game which screams "fun" very loud. Whether it's sliding around in the mud or surfing on the sea this game is really just a selection of mini games. Get to the top of the tower, roll the beach ball to the shop: whilst these may sound trivial and silly it turns the game into a load of very enjoyable mini chunks.

Unlike other adventure games, Sunshine is very easy to get into and to continue once you have had a break. You can tackle it in 10 minute goes if you want, or in a 4 hour marathon, but both equal the same result; an addictive and fun title full of little challenges and games. All sounds great does it not?

However there is one more factor that will make you run and buy this game for just £20 (at which it is now priced): Void levels. Pure and simple, these were Nintendo's

answer to the fact that Mario has moved away from his heritage. Void levels are simple levels where you need all the jumping and timing skills you needed for the 2D Mario titles. These levels are almost worth the price of the game alone simply because they give you a chance to play some genuinely hard levels that hark back to the days of 2D platform games.



So to those of you who don't own this game then go and buy it now, but far more likely to those of you reading this is to get the game out from your shelf and start playing it again, simply because if you did not finish it then you should have done, and if you did finish it, then have fun playing it again.

## Jim Taylor

My name is Jim Taylor and for Christmas I suggest you buy **Burnout 2**.



Despite the lack of a review in this magazine I can assuredly state that Burnout 2 is one of the most fun games I've played this year. Both in single player with the excellent Championship mode and in multiplayer with the superb four player Crash mode Burnout 2 is excellent fun. While you may eventually get bored the game will draw you back in with the Crash mode high score tables. It's great.

## deKay

My name is deKay, and as Editor I am going to recommend two games: **Viewtiful Joe** and **GTA: Vice City**.

Joe has so much style, and such grace that it cannot simply be ignored. It boasts some of the best graphics and fighting sequences ever seen - despite being mostly 2D and cartoony. It's hard, it's fast and it's new school and old school at the same time. Vice City, on the other hand, offers so much to do that even at full price it is a real bargain. Yes, it has problems and quirks, but the enjoyment of freely roaming a living city overcomes all these.

## The Rev

Hello readers, I'm The Rev and my recommendation for the Christmas period is the winter wonder that is **1080 Avalanche** on the Nintendo Gamecube. First impressions are terrible, I know. Match Race is too easy and there are some strange technical issues. But stick with it, try all the different modes and soon you'll understand. You'll get used to the controls and they'll suddenly feel just right. You'll begin to appreciate the cleverness of the level design. You'll spend hours trying to beat your ghost on your favourite track. And you'll fall in love. SSX3 has the polish, sure, but 1080, well, 1080 has the soul.

## Tim Miller

My name is Tim Miller, and I recommend you buy **Mario Kart: Double Dash!!** for the Gamecube.



Why? Because despite the industry's continual moves to realistic, violent, boring slug-fests, this game just screams fun, enjoyment, and colour. And violence, because if you lose out on a championship by one point just because Donkey Kong laid a massive banana by the finish line, you'll need a new TV.

# A Tardy Atari?

Tim Miller reports on ten games in one stick...

There have been many replica hardware releases in the past, but this one's got full copyright permission, which means it's being sold all over the place. It's an Atari 2600, contained in an Atari 2600 joystick. But is it any good?

In a word, yes. The emulation's not perfect - the sound in particular is not accurate and quite weak, and colours are a bit off; both these are particularly noticeable in Adventure. The joystick which the console is built into is also a bit thicker than the original 2600 sticks, and is less accurate. Another niggle is the

positioning of the "reset" button - it's far too easy to press it in the middle of a game.

The ten games included are a good selection - Adventure retains its replayability even now, and Asteroids is still great. However, we must wonder why they've included Breakout instead of Super Breakout; also, Gravitar is exceptionally tricky to play with the inaccurate joystick.

Overall, it's a good product, but for £25 you could well get an original 2600 and a few games to play on it. Look out for a bargain.



# Retro Buyers Guide

Fancy something a bit older for Christmas this year? No, not Granny. How about splashing out on a console you never bought? **deKay** tells you what to look out for.

## Nintendo Super NES

### What is it?

Nintendo's 16-bit console and rival to the Megadrive.

### How much will it cost me?

Second-hand shops generally flog them for around a fiver, but that'll be unboxed and gameless usually. Expect to fork out nearer £20 on eBay for a boxed SNES with a few games.

### What games should I get?

Pretty much anything with "Mario" in the title: Super Mario World and Super Mario Kart for sure. Sports fans could pick up ISS for a quid, and for those who like shooters then Super R-Type could be your bag. Also look out for Castlevania, Zombies Ate My Neighbours, Super Street Fighter II and F-Zero. RPG fans are well kitted out with Zelda: A Link to the Past, Chrono Trigger, Secret of Mana and several Final Fantasy titles. Unboxed games shouldn't be more than a few quid, but expect to pay up to £40 for some of the RPGs.



## Sega Megadrive

### What is it?

Sega's 16-bitter, released in the UK in 1991.

### How much will it cost me?

Much the same as a SNES, perhaps a little less. £20 on eBay is top whack.

### What games should I get?

Obviously, Sonic will feature here somewhere. If you can get both Sonic 3 and Sonic and Knuckles, you can connect them together for the definitive Sonic game. Super Monaco GP 2 is a fun driving game, and Super Street Fighter II is arguably the best home version (although you'll need a 6-button pad to make best use of it). Phantasy Star II, III and IV are essential to roleplayers, as are Shining Force I and II (although as with the SNES, these can be expensive). If you enjoy shooters then consider Thunderforce IV and Hellfire, and if you like them impossibly hard then Sol-Deace is worth a try (although very rare). Gunstar Heroes is a great platform/shmup, and often considered Treasure's finest hour.





# Atari 2600

## What is it?

The most successful early console.

## How much will it cost me?

If you stumble across one in a carboot sale, expect to pay about £5 for one with a few games. On eBay, ten times that isn't uncommon. Unlikely to find one in a second-hand shop.

## What games should I get?

Don't expect too much in the graphics department, and you can easily find some excellent versions of old arcade games. Asteroids and Space Invaders are particularly notable. If you're into platformers, you'll enjoy Pitfall, and Keystone Kapers is good fun. Adventure is an excellent, erm, adventure game with unlimited replayability value. Combat is a collection of enjoyable two player shoot-each-other games, and since it came with the console for many years is easy to find and stupidly cheap (10p, even!). Finally, the 2600 plays host to one of the best four player games ever: Warlords. It's a bit like Breakout, with a player in each corner. You'll need a couple of pairs of paddles though too.



# Nintendo NES

## What is it?

An 8-bit console that worked its way into 1 in 4 US homes, apparently.

## How much will it cost me?

Fully boxed sets go for £15-ish on eBay, but your local second-hand shop may have one for a fiver. Beware that they're prone to damaged cartridge slots though.

## What games should I get?

With approximately 27 billion games, you have plenty of choice. Being a Nintendo console, naturally Mario games should be top of the list. Super Mario Bros 3 is by far the best platformer on any 8-bit system, but Super Mario Bros 1 and 2 are also worthwhile. Kirby's Adventure is another excellent platformer, whereas Legend of Zelda is still a worthwhile action RPG even after all these years. Fighting fans could do worse than Rare's Battletoads, which despite the name is great fun, and quite original. Puzzle-wise, why not try Dr. Mario, or even Tetris (if you can find it - it's pretty rare).



# Sega Saturn

## What is it?

Sega's much criticised (mostly unfairly) answer to the Playstation

## How much will it cost me?

Not that common on the High Street, but they do show up in second-hand shops occasionally for around £10-20. eBay will set you back about thirty notes.

## What games should I get?

Virtua Fighter 2, Panzer Dragoon, Daytona USA and Sega Rally are all obvious essential purchases. One of the best fighting games ever made resides on the Saturn too - Fighters Megamix. Sonic Team fans will enjoy the magical and original NiGHTS (and Christmas NiGHTS! - see page 11), as well as the great Burning Rangers, which was sadly spoilt slightly by being a little over-ambitious for the console. If you like Resident Evil, why not seek out the very rare Deep Fear. Gunslingers can take aim with Virtua Cop 2, and if you don't own a Megadrive then Sonic Jam is an essential compilation of the blue hedgehog's 16-bit games, with an added 3D game and stacks of Sonic history extras.



## Hold The Back Page

I have been banned. Banned from buying any more games until after Christmas. My Other Half has decided that I buy too many games (although I can't see where she gets that idea from) and has placed this evil restriction upon me.

As you can appreciate, especially if you have read my comments in previous issues of **ugvm**, this is not a great state of affairs. My shelves don't fill themselves, you know. eBay has been stripped from my bookmarks, and Game and Amazon are visited now only for present buying and **ugvm** researching purposes. I'm starting to get withdrawal symptoms, I'm sure.

On the few occasions I have mistakenly wandered over to Play's website, I see bargains galore - XIII and Prince of Persia for just £18 each. Game delivers a blow to the groin with Project Gotham 2 at £20. I even missed out on Tactics Ogre (mint, boxed, sealed, but not R@RE) on an eBay auction which went for £1.20 including postage. Where are these bargains when I don't have to say on the wagon, eh? I haven't even been able to buy any more incomprehensible WonderSwan games, despite the current price slide of many titles.

On the plus side, it means I have managed to play

more of the games I currently own. Kirby's Nightmare has been completed, as has Metroid Prime. Mario Kart: Double Dash!! is almost finished, and I've now started playing F-Zero GX. Even Tiger Woods and Billy Hatcher have been played recently. They've helped, but they're not the same. Only "New Shiny!" can quench my thirst.

The only thing to keep me going is the knowledge that I have a Zelda Classics disc on the way to me from Nintendo's website, bought with VIP stars and so therefore exempt from the ban. Or so I thought until it was too late and I suffered a severe reprimand.

This all means that I have been saving. Saving hard, with nothing to spend my gaming money on, and so come December 26th I'll be clicking furiously to fill my online shopping baskets with every game ever made ever. All of the titles on my Amazon Wish List will be ordered, every disc in Game will be mine. I'll pre-order everything due out in the next fifteen years, and I'll even purchase an N-Gage. That'll learn her.

**deKay**

## Next Issue in **ugvm**

Once the parties have finished, the mince pies eaten, and the hangovers gone (although no doubt turkey will remain), the magical creation of the next issue of **ugvm** should be well underway.

## The Next Outrun

We've promised it before, but this time we mean it! Honest! Many games have been hyped as The Next Outrun, but how many actually were contenders for the title?

## More Features

We don't know what they are yet, but no doubt they'll be great!

## More Reviews

Still got some cash left over after Christmas and the sales? Why not let us decide what to spend it all on?

## **ugvm** needs you!

Would you like to contribute to **ugvm**? The magazine is written for you, and by you, so if you don't help - you don't get a magazine!

We're always looking for reviews, features, letters and ideas. Please send any submissions or brainwaves to **editor@ugvm.org.uk**, and if we like it, we'll print it. Simple as that. If you're going to review something, please have a read of the Review Guidelines on the **ugvm** site ([www.ugvm.org.uk](http://www.ugvm.org.uk)) first.

**ugvm** staff can usually be found in the [uk.games.video.misc](http://uk.games.video.misc) newsgroup, so feel free to pop in there for a chat. So long as it is on-topic, of course!

Happy Christmas and New Year to all our readers, and a big thankyou to everyone who has helped us with the magazine this year.

**ugvm**

Christmas 2003

<http://www.ugvm.org.uk>

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